

PRIORITY

(Security Classification)

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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FROM

AmEmbassy, Cairo

1270
DESP. NO.

TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

November 23, 1953

DATE

REF

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SUBJECT:

SOVIETS CONTACT EMBASSY OFFICER.

1. On November 3, the reporting officer accompanied Ambassador Caffery to the Soviet Legation to return the courtesy call of the new Soviet Minister to Cairo, Mr. Soled. While Ambassador Caffery and the Soviet Minister were conversing, the reporting officer talked in another room with Vikenti P. Sobolev, First Secretary and private secretary to the Minister. (Sobolev accompanied the Minister when the latter paid his courtesy call on Ambassador Caffery on October 28 and sat in on the meeting). Sobolev was not at all reticent and talked about himself in an open and friendly manner. He told the reporting officer the following: (the conversation was in French)

Age 38. Lives in a furnished apartment on Hishmat Pasha for which he pays LE 40 monthly. He was stationed in Cairo from the end of World War II until the fall of 1952 when he returned to Moscow. He fell ill there. He came back to Cairo in early October 1953. Has also served in Paris and London. He chose specialization in the Middle East (he attended Moscow's Oriental Institute) and has visited most of the countries in this area. He claims that in addition to French, he speaks Arabic and that he understands English and some German. His wife and small child are now in Moscow, but will join him soon. He remarked that the reporting officer must live close to the Soviet Legation as he had seen him several times and had recognized him from his pictures in the newspapers.

2. The next approach occurred on the evening of November 5. Serge G. Trokhien, Attache, came uninvited to the apartment of the reporting officer at 8 o'clock in the evening on the pretext of asking whether, as the American Ambassador's secretary, he should be invited to the Soviet Revolution Reception on November 7. Trokhien stayed for an hour and talked freely about himself. He said he lived in the same apartment building, and that therefore "friendship should exist". He invited the officer to drop down to his apartment at any time for a drink of vodka and to meet his family. In the course of the conversation Trokhien was caught in many inconsistencies and sometimes outright fabrications. (For further information about Trokhien see referenced despatch and enclosure).

3. The third step toward establishing friendly contact occurred at the Soviet Reception on November 7 when Trokhien invited the officer to come to his apartment on a specific future date (see reference).

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Page 2 of 2
Desp. No. 1270
From Cairo

Security Information
SECRET
(Classification)

Page _____ of _____
Encl. No. _____
Desp. No. _____
From _____

4. The latest contact was at the abovementioned dinner with Trokhien (see enclosure).

Comments:

Since the dinner, Trokhien has not tried to make further contact with the reporting officer. The reporting officer's apartment has been inspected to make certain that no microphones or other devices were placed in his rooms while he was dining with Trokhien. CAS was given a full report on each of the above conversations and interviews after they occurred.

The situation is complicated by the fact that the reporting officer still has relatives in Soviet-controlled Hungary (though he is not close to them). So far, it cannot be ascertained if these deliberate attempts to get on friendly terms with the reporting officer are just a part of the new Soviet peace offensive or if more sinister reasons are behind it.

Jefferson Caffery

Enclosure: (Confidential)

Memo of Conversation with
Trokhien, November 16, 1953.

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